

DRAFT

Proposal for the Personnel Board

A while back, I proposed that the Personnel Procedures needed some changes that would make the grievance procedure for non-union employees easier to follow and more logical.

The Personnel Procedures Manual states: (page 12)

It is the policy of the Town of Amherst to provide an effective and acceptable means for employees to bring problems and complaints concerning their well being at work to the attention of their supervisors. Therefore, a grievance procedure is established for the benefit and use of those employees not covered by collective bargaining agreements.....

As it now stands, non-union employees must either go it alone through the process or use the assistance of the Human Resource Director, who reports directly to the Town Manager, which could pose a conflict of interest for the HR director, and could affect an employee's confidence in contacting that HR director. While the Personnel Board (PB) does not have this conflict, since its members are appointed by the Select Board, there is an inherent problem built into the system, as the Human Resources Director and the Town manager often attend meetings of the PB, which are also public meetings. One of the tasks of the PB is to serve as a Board of Appeals for grievances of Town employees who are not covered by a formal collective bargaining agreement. Thus, they are not in a position to assist employees during the process or even informally assist an employee who may feel mistreated except to give technical advice, as their involvement might corrupt their ability to serve impartially in their capacity on the Board of Appeals.

I believe there needs to be an added layer of assistance for non-union employees wishing to enter into the grievance process. Union employees may go to their union and have a Union Representative assist them. Non-union employees do not have such a person to assist them, and it is this omission I wish to correct.

Therefore, I recommend that the Personnel Procedures Manual be amended in the following way:

Under GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE Pg. 13)

(Existing language in *italics*; proposed additions in **bold**; ~~deleted words with strike through~~)

STEP 1 The Town wants to resolve conflicts in an amicable fashion and as such encourages the use of Step 1 on an informal basis to resolve conflicts or disputes.

An employee who believes he/she has a grievance **may contact a Select Board member of their choosing to assist them during the grievance steps. This assistance may be in the form of advice and/or of physically accompanying them to the various meetings outlined in the steps below.**

*An employee who believes he/she has a grievance shall present it verbally or in writing to his/her immediate supervisor within ~~ten (10) working days~~ **one month** after the occurrence which prompts the grievance.....*

It is my intention to present this suggestion to the PB for their consideration. I would like the endorsement of the SB before doing so.

Gerry Weiss

4/2/09